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Grammaire de la Conversation, Direct Method in French, by Mary H. Knowles and Berthe Des Combes Favard. D. C. Heath and Co., 1916. clxiii—171 pp., \$1.15.

Fundamentals of French, a Combination of the Direct and Grammar Methods, by Frances R. Angus, Henry Holt and Co., 1916. xv—280 pp.

A Practical Introduction to French by Luther Herbert Alexander, Oxford University Press, 1916. xxi—355 pp., \$1.00.

The above beginners' books in French are worthy of the attention of progressive teachers for various reasons. All show a laudable desire to do something, if not entirely novel, at least fresh and stimulating. Two at least are a departure from the methods generally pursued in our public institutions; the other, though more or less along the old lines, yet offers something new and better than the majority of books of that nature now in use. In this rapid review lack of space forbids a critical examination of details; a general outline of the aims and plans of the work is all that will be attempted.

The Knowles-Favard *Grammaire de la Conversation* contains 128 lessons of one to six exercises each, a section devoted to rules, four pages of *formules épistolaires*, two pages of proverbs, a chart of French sounds, instructions for home work, a questionnaire covering the rules of the first twenty-nine lessons, and a vocabulary of about eighteen hundred words. The material contained in the work would take up fully two years of high school at the rate of five hours a week, or two years of college at three hours a week. Each lesson is made up of a number of questions and answers calling for answers and questions on the part of the students. The work is done orally in class after it has been prepared in writing at home. Minute instructions are given for the performance of that task. Reference is made throughout the work to the authors' *Perfect French Possible*, a treatise on pronunciation. I am convinced that the method followed for two or three years according to directions, will yield distinctly good results. There is little opportunity for shirking on the part of the student. The book should also prove interesting to the instructor who will be able to use it for years without that feeling of boredom which after two or three years' use seems to exude from some grammars we all know. The conventional translating grammar with a few so-called conversational phrases thrown in at the end of each lesson becomes in time deadly to the best teacher. It may be added that in the Knowles-Favard method no cheap devices are resorted to in order to make grammar attractive. It is all work and little play, and students are made to feel constantly that they are earnestly trying to acquire command of a living tongue. Yet the work will prove interesting to learner and teacher alike if, as the authors recommend in their foreword, the sentences are "acted out" or "mimed." Teachers who have little opportunity to speak French outside of their classes will find this book helpful for their own use. It is idiomatic throughout, and what strikes one, even at a superficial perusal, is the wealth of colloquial expressions (e. g. Comment vous portez-vous? A peu près bien. Comme ci comma ça. Pas trop mal. On ne peut

mieux etc.) The authors' claim, made in the preface, that pupils can be made to speak from the outset, not only grammatically "but with ease and flexibility," that they can "think these things in French", or that *Perfect French Possible* referred to above gives "infallible rules for the production of all French sounds as well as rules for rhythm which are to be found in no other published work" seems exaggerated to the experienced teacher who has striven for years to achieve such a highly desirable, though seldom attained result.

Fundamentals of French is more strictly speaking a systematic guide for the teaching of conversation than a grammar. Vocabulary and rules are taught by means of explanations with appropriate gestures, motions and mimicry on the part of the teacher, by questions and answers in French, and by a number of questions and answers in English for translation. One seeks in vain for the usefulness of the paragraphs entitled *Traduisez*. For if in chapter III the students have already answered in French the question "Où sont les livres?" by "Ils sont sur la table," nothing can be gained by making them translate half a dozen lines lower on the page "Where are the books? They are on the desk." It would seem more logical to adopt the so-called Berlitz method and exclude English altogether. The grammatical facts are stated in small type at the foot of the page, as concisely as possible,—a good practice in a book of this type. Some parts—the subjunctive, for instance—are treated quite fully. A grammar resumé is added separate from the main part of the book (pp. 169–228). Some fairy tales (*Cendrillon, Chaperon Rouge*), a couple of short stories (*Noiraud, l'Escapade*), extracts from *Les trois mousquetaires* and of *Le voyage autour du monde* are included for home reading or class treatment. All in all it is a work that will render valuable service especially with small classes where there is opportunity to give students individual attention. Far less provision is made for written work than in the Knowles-Favard book. On the other hand, the pronunciation is fully set forth in an introduction covering seventeen pages. This part is done with more than ordinary care and thought, and will prove very helpful to both teacher and pupil. The book has a complete vocabulary.

The next work is less of a departure from the conventional grammar type. Dr. L. H. Alexander's *A Practical Introduction to French*, intended for the first and second year of high schools and a first year college course has the familiar features: rule or rules of grammar with examples, paradigms, vocabulary preceding each lesson, oral drill, written exercises, review questions, *toute la lyre*. Five pages are devoted to the new grammatical nomenclature recommended by the Joint Committee, and applied in the present book. The first few chapters are taken up with matters of pronunciation, and they are introduced with the categorical statement that "The sounds must be learned from a teacher." This is obviously true if the teacher himself has a good pronunciation. The statement might have a disquieting effect on the pupil's mind should he have doubts as to the orthodoxy of his instructor's accent. It should be stated, however, that the author does give the approximate English equivalents of the French sounds, together with a phonetic transcription of several lessons, in an appendix (pp. 236–245). Some of those approximations are open to criticism; thus the *a* of *pas* and *pâte* is like the *a* of *palm* only in

certain sections of the country. In some parts of South Carolina, and, I think of New England, it has the sound of **a** in **lamb**: on the other hand the English **a** in the same word is far too broad. Again, the **o** of the French **pot** is very unlike the **o** of the English **note**. We all realize of course that it is not easy to find English equivalents, and perhaps we should not criticize an author too severely for not always finding the exact shade or what we think is the exact shade.

There are forty-two lessons in all. Twenty-four deal with the general rules of grammar and their application; eighteen are given up to the irregular verbs and to an elaboration of rules studied in the first part. The practice work of the latter part is based mainly on three short stories.

The author states in his introduction that "the book encourages a large amount of oral work." Yet the exercises for oral practice seem rather scant. The teacher will therefore have to rely on his own ingenuity to supply what is lacking in this respect. At any rate it is a careful piece of work, and, if used judiciously, by condensing the somewhat lengthy grammatical explanations preceding each lesson, by supplying the oral drill, the book ought to be of excellent service in classes where the translation method is followed primarily.

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Elementary Spanish Grammar by Espinosa and Allen.
American Book Co., p. 367; \$1.24.

This book has many features which should commend themselves to the approval of teachers of Spanish. The Present Indicative of the regular verb is introduced in the first lesson thus making possible the use of connected passages for translation from Spanish into English from the beginning of the book. The conversational exercises which are very practical might be made still more valuable by introducing questions involving a change of subject in the reply. Changes of this sort, however, can readily be made by the teacher. The oral exercises and composition for translation into Spanish are exceptionally good, but one might wish that the composition could have been put in the form of connected passages earlier in the course of study. The vocabularies are not too long and show an excellent choice of words.

The grammatical introductions to the lessons are usually good and the rules are well stated, but some of the examples involve points which have not previously been treated in the grammar. For instance, in § 35, a. 1, dealing with the use of the definite article before "general nouns," the example *las madres aman a sus hijos* occurs, while the use of *a* before a direct object is not treated before § 44. Both *es* and *esta* occur in the texts and examples and *bueno* occurs in the vocabulary with both meanings of "good" and "well" before the differences between *ser* and *estar* are explained. In § 64 the statement is made that "the last two of a series of adjectives (modifying a noun) are usually connected by the conjunction *y* and in the examples under that paragraph the form *e* is used and *y* is not. Another example should here be introduced showing the regular use of *y* and a note stating under what circum-